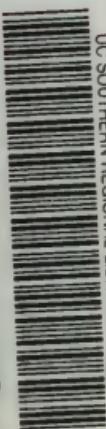


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THE FIRE IN CHICAGO.

—

People were working on the roof, and leaning on the side, holding wet blankets and cloths over the flames, shouting.

# Frank Harper;

OR,

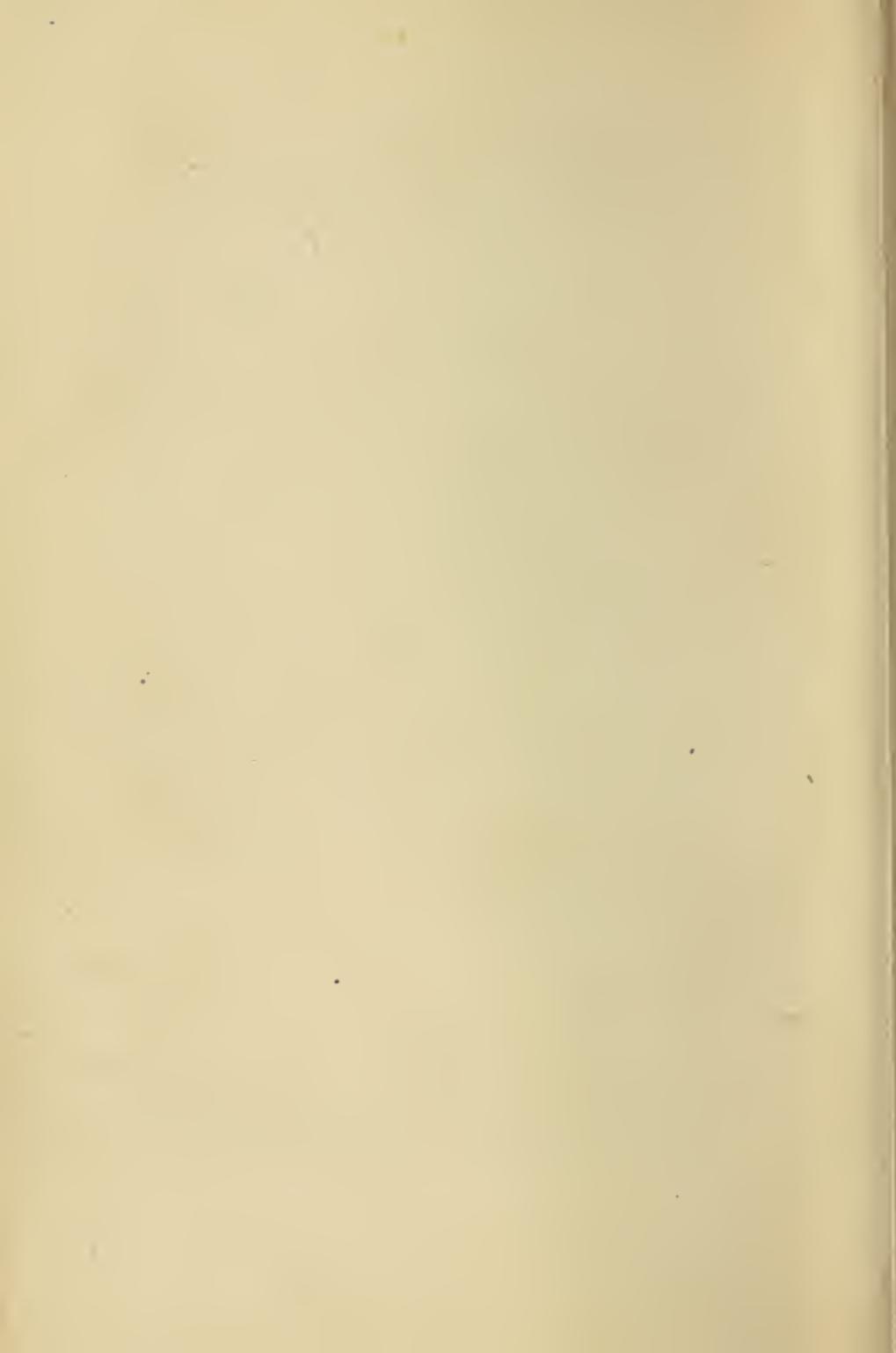
## BEGINNING LIFE.

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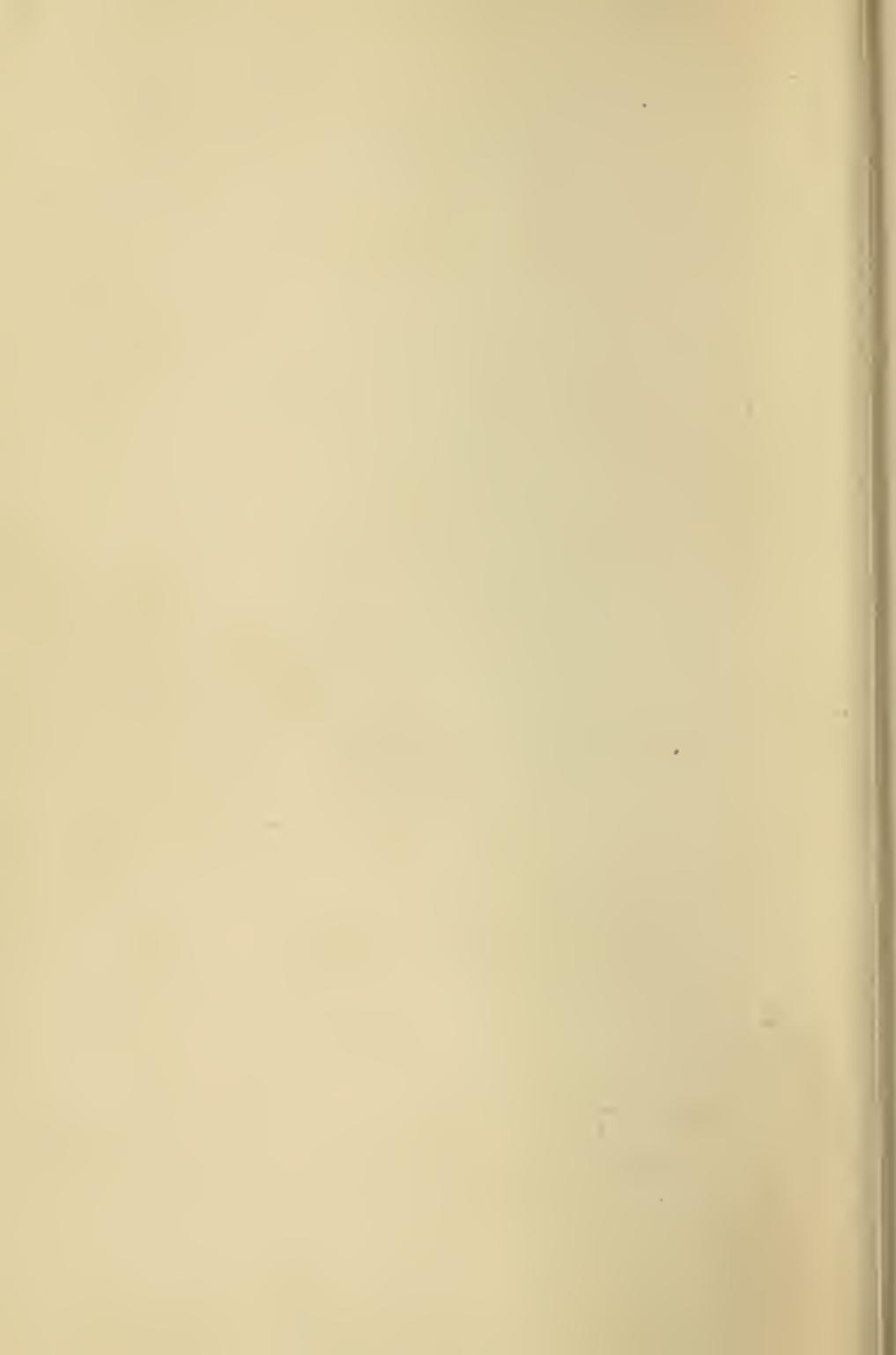


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# Frank Harper;

OR,

## BEGINNING LIFE.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### COMING TO TOWN.

IT was Frank's first visit to a great city, and he looked at every thing with wonder. The noise of the streets seemed to deafen him, and he scarcely escaped being run over by the carts and drays.

"This," thought he, "is New York! I really did not think it was so large!" And yet what Frank had seen as yet was less than the hundredth part of New York. But the rows of tall houses were so long, and the shop-windows were so fine, and the sights in the streets were so new and wonderful, that he was in a sort of rapture.

After Frank had spent most of the day in rambling about, he found his feet very sore and his whole body wearied. After taking tea, he was shewn to his lodgings, away up in the attic of a three-storey house. Now it was that he began to feel that he was in a strange place. Two older boys occupied the same little chamber ; they were, like himself, employed in shops, in John Street. They had already gone to bed. Frank sat down a few moments, and began to think over the events of the busy day, which seemed to him like a dream. At length, he opened his little red trunk, and the first thing he saw was the pocket-bible, which his mother had given him. You may be sure some tears fell upon it, as he opened it. He found the marker, which his sister had embroidered for him, and read on it the words, "O HOW I LOVE THY LAW !" He kneeled down and prayed to God, with many tears, that he might be kept and blessed, now that he was separated from his parents.

Frank's bed was not so good as the one which he had left at Coventry ; and he was surprised, for he thought everything would be very grand in the great city. But he soon

forgot himself, and slept (as healthy boys sleep), soundly and well, until the day dawned.

It was a bright winter morning, and Ned and Joe were already dressed. They did not wait for Bible or prayer, but hurried away to their shops. Frank had time only to read a few verses, and to offer a short prayer. Boys in the city must rise early, or they will lose their devotions. And unless they form the habit at first, they are apt to have prayerless days. I am afraid there are hundreds who never pray at all.

The next thing was a quick walk, or rather run, to the place of business. Here Frank had to kindle a coal-fire, which he found no easy job, and then to open the shop, and sweep and dust it out. Mr Boggs came in about nine o'clock, and then Frank hurried to his breakfast. It was the first breakfast he ever took without family prayer, and he thought of his father, mother, and sisters. He ate fast; and, to tell the truth, there was not much to eat. His mind wandered away to the full table in the country. A good many persons sat at the table, but no one took any notice of the little country-boy.

It would take long to tell of the day's work,

Frank was kept very busy, as is usual with the youngest. He was sent on many errands, to strange places, and several times lost his way: for which he was rebuked by his employers, and laughed at by the clerks and porter. Once or twice he was brought into trouble by bad boys; and once he had his fist doubled to strike a fellow who had teased him; but he thought better of it. And he afterwards found, that the wisest plan in the streets is to go about one's business as quietly as possible. He was shocked at the bad language which he heard from the boys even younger than himself; especially from those who carried newspapers, and from ill-looking chaps, who seemed to have no work to do. In a great city, it is impossible to avoid hearing such things; and the only way for a good boy is to take no notice of them, except to set the mind firmly against such evil words, asking God's help to be kept clear of the like sin.

During the few moments of the day which he had to himself, and was waiting for his parcels or letters, Frank's mind strayed off to his country home; and he sighed to think that he was so far away. But he comforted himself by remembering what his father had

told him at parting: "My son, you are going to a strange place ; but if you are faithful, you will be able to support your mother and me in our old age, if we need it." And then he said to himself: "I will do anything, and bear anything, to help my beloved parents."

When the day was over, and the work of the shop was done, he went slowly to his boarding-house, weary and sad. He took his hasty meal by himself, and then went to his room. Ned and Joe were in high glee about a nine-pin-alley which they had been visiting ; but Frank could not enter into their pleasure. They laughed at him when he sat down to his Bible ; and, for a moment, he thought he would shut it up. But then he remembered how often his mother had told him "never to be shamed out of what was good," and so he read on. He was afterwards glad of this ; for, in a little time, they grew weary of their jesting. He even summoned up resolution to kneel down by his bed and pray ; though Joe sang "Old Dan Tucker," on purpose to disturb him, and Ned threw a bit of old rag over his head, while he was on his knees. I cannot say that poor Frank's thoughts did not wander a little ; but

he thus gained a great victory over himself. The boys fixed on him the name of *the Parson*; and gave notice at the table that he would preach the next Sunday. Frank coloured a little, but was wise enough to say nothing.

Let the reader observe, that a boy who is afraid of being laughed at, will never become a man of independence; and a boy who is laughed out of his prayers will be very likely to be laughed out of many other good habits and principles.

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## CHAPTER II.

### TEMPTATION AND TROUBLE.

A FEW weeks passed away, and Frank had become quite familiar with his business. He had received two pleasant letters from home, which he carefully folded up, after he had read them about twenty times. He had sent a knitting-basket to his mother, and a pair of gloves to each of his sisters. It was becoming easy for him to find his way. He was quite at home at the post-office, the wharves, and the banks.

Messrs Boggs and Buncombe, his employers, began to find that he was always in his place; the clerks saw that he was good-natured; and Wickes, the book-keeper, had even gone so far as to give him a second-hand pinchbeck watch, which kept tolerable time if carefully set every morning.

But trouble was near.. And let me tell my young reader, no youth in town can escape trouble.

One very cold night, when he came home from the store, he found Briggs and Denton waiting for him at the door.

"Come, my lad," said Denton, "we are going to the Bowery Theatre, and we mean to take you along."

"I thank you," said Frank, "but I do not wish to go."

"Not wish to go!" cried he; "and why not? It shall cost you nothing; we are going to stand treat. You *shall* go, Mr Parson."

To make an unpleasant story short, they persuaded Frank against his convictions. He went. Their seat was in the gallery, and, to his sorrow, he saw and heard things that night which made him sure that it was a wicked place. For a few moments the no-

velty of the thing pleased him. He listened to charming music. He saw fine players, decked and painted; and he was astonished at the scenery and the dancing. But he also saw and heard things which he knew were neither modest nor virtuous; and his heart was full of the conviction that he was in the wrong place. When they came out, in a great crowd, about eleven o'clock at night, he turned to the boys, and said: "Now, mind what I say—this is the first time I ever was in a theatre—and it shall be the last."

This raised a loud laugh. "Aha!" said Ned, "do you say so? Very well, so *we* said, three years ago; but we have got well over that; haven't we, Joe?"

"Yes," answered Joe, "I go to the theatre every week; and some day I will tell you where we get the money. And there are other places, too, where we mean to take you; mind that, Mr Parson."

These words opened Frank's eyes; he began to see his danger, and was more firmly resolved to resist these temptations. He thought over several texts of Scripture, and wished he had remembered them a little sooner. How solemnly his aged father had said to him, "My

son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not."

When they reached their boarding-house in Dey Street, the boys found that they were locked out; for it was near midnight. The noise of wheels had almost ceased in Broadway, and the only sound they heard was the sharp click of the watchman's staff upon the flag-stones.

Presently the heavy sound of the City-hall bell began to give the signal of a fire. Almost immediately the engines were out, and a crowd began to gather. Ned and Joe were soon among the throng, and Frank saw nothing to do but to join them. Before they reached the place of the fire, Joe Denton stumbled over a rope and in recovering himself, thrust his elbow into the eye of a fireman, who struck him a smart blow. Joe and Ned were soon engaged in a brawl with the firemen; and Frank was trying to pull them away, when all of a sudden he felt his arm roughly seized, and looking round perceived that he was in the hands of a sturdy man, whose gilt star shewed that he was one of the police. "Come, my young blade," said the officer, "I must give you a lodging; you

begin early. I guess your mother does not know you're out?"

The very word "mother" went to poor Frank's heart. "Indeed, indeed, sir," said he, "I am not doing any harm—I didn't want to be here—I was only trying to get those big boys home."

"O yes, the old story—I've heard the like before. Nobody is never doing no harm. But I'll take care of you. What is your name?"

"Frank Harper."

"Where do you live?"

"I am in Boggs and Buncombe's shop, John Street."

"Where do you live?"

"I board at Mrs Maggs's, Dey Street, near Washington."

"Well—come on." so he hurried him along, and soon arrived at the watchhouse. Here he was filled with horror, to find himself in a close room, heated by a stove, almost red hot, and occupied by three drunken vagrants, and a woman of tawdry dress and very red countenance. It was a night of wretchedness. In the morning, the chief clerk of Messrs Boggs and Buncombe, having heard of the boy, appeared for him and had him re-

leased. Poor Frank could scarcely bear the looks of his employers ; but he told them the whole truth. The clerks had their sport about it ; but, what was most hard to bear, the larger boys, who had betrayed him into the snare and then escaped, made fun of his distress, almost every day, for weeks after.

This is not an uncommon occurrence in a great city. There are lads who, in trying to brave the ridicule which comes on them, after such things, only become more hardened. I am glad to say it was not so with Frank. He was confirmed in his determination to keep out of bad company, and especially never to be out at night. These hours of hunger, fear, shame, and imprisonment, and the disgrace which followed, were a lesson to him as long as he lived.

Most of the evils which befall youth in a great city are connected with the streets. It is hardly possible for a boy to be much out at night, without becoming depraved. The only safe rule is, to stay within doors. Yet it is wonderful to observe, that you can scarcely walk the streets, at any hour before midnight, without meeting numbers of boys, even of tender years. They are to be found in gangs

about the doors of the theatre, and sometimes the money which gains them entrance is procured by theft.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### YOUTHFUL ANXIETIES.

IT was on a bright Saturday evening in December, that Frank had an errand to the foot of Chambers Street, to receive some parcels by the steamboat from Peekskill. The boat was delayed, and this gave him half an hour to himself, which was unusual. He spent it in walking upon the pier, looking at the dark, rapid waves, crested with light foam, at the numerous craft of the river, and especially at the low hills of his native Jersey, behind which the sun had just gone down, leaving all the west in a blush with the evening red.

Frank was not less cheerful commonly than other boys of his age, but late events had made him serious. He looked across the river to the hills, in the direction where he thought

the little village of Coventry must lie. He thought of his father; "I suppose he is now getting home the cattle, and making an end of the week's work. Mother is preparing everything for Sunday. Mary and Anne are looking over the clothes; or perhaps hearing one another say the Sunday-school lesson. And here am I—by myself—and in disgrace!" Here the little boy took out his blue handkerchief, to wipe his eyes; but he wept the more, when he saw on the corner of it the mark wrought by his mother's needle. "I am sorry, I am sorry!" said he, "I have done wrong—I have indeed—but I hope I have not done as wrong as people think." And he wept the more.

Be not cast down, my young friend, these are manly tears! Let every youth, who reads these lines, know, that sorrow for sin is nothing to be ashamed of.

As Frank turned hastily, on reaching the corner of the pier, he found himself met by a young man of grave appearance, and kind looks, who spoke to him in a civil tone, and said, "Good evening, my boy! So I see you have business here, as well as myself."

"Yes, sir," he replied, "I am waiting for the 'Mountaineer'; I am to get some parcels by one of the hands of the boat."

"My business is with the same boat," said the stranger; "but it is not so pleasant. I am looking for news of a lad who has robbed our shop, and has been pursued up the river by an officer."

"Ah! I hadn't heard of it. It is bad enough when boys take to robbing."

"Bad enough, indeed; but it is becoming too common. This young fellow broke open the safe of Mr Brownley, and took a pocket-book, with eighty pounds, and papers worth five times as much. New York boys are getting to be *men* in wickedness. Do you live in town?"

"Yes," said Frank, "I do now; but I have not been here long. I am a country boy."

"Then," said the other, "let me give you a bit of advice, my young friend. *I* was a country boy too, not long ago, and I know something of the dangers of the city. *Take care of bad companions.*"

This he said with so much seriousness, and with a look of so much cordiality, that Frank

was encouraged to say: "I have found out already what a bad thing it is to go with wicked boys."

"It is a good sign to hear you say so. *Forewarned is forearmed.* And as you seem to be aware of the danger, you must let me put these tracts into your hands. You must read them. And if you will call at our shop, I will give you more. My name is Brooks; and I am a teacher in the Sunday-school of the Locust Street church."

Just then the boat came in sight, Frank received his packages, and was soon on his way to town. But as he walked along, he thought on the few words he had heard. There was nothing in them, which he had not known before; and yet they had made a deep impression on his mind. This should encourage us always to drop a good word to young persons, when we have an opportunity. Some have thus been instrumental in saving a soul from death.

That night Frank lay awake upon his bed, thinking over his conduct. He could not reproach himself, except in regard to his sinful compliance about the theatre. But this hurt his conscience, and made him think of

other faults. So it often is. Thinking on one transgression is likely to make us think of other sins. "How I wonder at myself," thought he. "I was ashamed to say No. Now I remember what our minister used to say, '*Boys, if you mean to make anything in the world, learn to say no.*' Now, I know what he meant. I was ashamed—I was cowardly—I knew better!" And here his thoughts began to turn into prayer, and he asked God to pardon his weakness.

Frank had been piously educated, by excellent parents, and he knew what was right. But he also knew that he had never experienced that great change, which the Scriptures call being "born again." A long time before it was day, while Joe and Ned were fast asleep, he, wrapped in his cloak, was kneeling down in the corner of his cold garret room, praying to God. Though not seen by men, he was seen by angels, and by God. Happy is the youth who sometimes steals time even from slumber, for such a purpose.

The next day was the Sabbath. The poor fellow had no one to direct him to a place of worship. It is a pity that so many youth are cast upon a great and wicked city, just in

this way. Frank did what many do, and what he had done on other Sabbaths. He wandered about the streets looking for a church. He went into one; it was crowded with people. The house was full of the fumes of incense; he saw pictures and crosses, and heard prayers in a strange tongue; he did not remain long.

He approached another; many coaches were drawn up before it. The pews were filled with rich-looking people. There was a very young man in the pulpit, who was preaching about the evils of enthusiasm. Frank grew tired of standing, and came out. After roaming through several streets, he came to an old-fashioned building, and on entering was shewn to a seat in the gallery. The minister was just finishing his sermon, and Frank heard him several times repeat these words: "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults." He found that they were in the nineteenth psalm. "That means *me!*" thought Frank. So he went home musing upon it. The words rang in his ears. "Cleanse thou me from secret faults." He preached quite a little sermon to himself, and turned the words into

prayer. When he got to the house he committed the whole psalm to memory. I cannot say that he felt true repentance, but he certainly saw more of his sins than he had ever seen before. Where he had thought there was *one*, he now beheld a *thousand*. Thus God was causing him to "understand his errors." Reader, have you any knowledge of this?

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## CHAPTER IV.

### RESOLUTIONS AND REFORMATION.

MONDAY morning is a time when industrious people feel uncommonly bright. Every thing seems to take a fresh start. The body and mind both have had rest, and they work with a sort of spring. This is the good effect of the Sabbath. Those do not feel thus, who spend it in labour or frolic.

On that Monday (the fourth of December), Frank was up bright and early. He had got leave of Mrs Maggs to kindle a fire in the dining-room, in the lower storey; and there

you might have seen him, at a table, with a dipped-candle which he had bought, and with pen and ink, very busy over a sheet of paper. What can our Frank be doing? Surely he is not about to make a book! Perhaps it is a letter. No such thing. At the top of the sheet he has written, in fair round-hand, like a ledger, these words:—

“ MY RESOLUTIONS.

“ I. *Resolved*—That I will go to church every Sunday morning and afternoon.

“ II. *Resolved*—That I will read in my Bible daily.

“ III. *Resolved*—That I will become as good as ever I can.”

Poor Frank! His face is all in a glow of earnestness! Shall we blame him for his resolutions? No, no! The things are all good—very good. But perhaps he may find that it is more easy to resolve than to perform.

Our little man had set out in the week with such a vehemence of purpose, that, if you had been in the secret, you might have read determination in his very face. He even composed

his countenance to unusual sobriety. He feared to speak, lest he should utter something wrong. He was resolved not to lose his temper. He did his errands in half the usual time. He felt so much need of being honest, that he returned a piece of twine, which he had previously taken from a shelf. He read several chapters in the Bible, and said his prayers with more attention than ever before. In a word, Frank began to feel as if he was almost as good a boy as he was required to be.

In the evening, as they were all sitting around the fire, the company were chatting, laughing, cracking nuts, and singing; but Frank was very grave and silent. He felt as if he was better than all around him. They wondered what had come over him, and thought he was sulky. Indeed it had much of that appearance. But he was trying to make himself good. At length, as he was going up stairs rather later than usual, with his night lamp, the thought came suddenly into his head: "Why, all this is very much like the *Pharisees!*" It was too true. He said over the words, "*Who can understand his errors?*" "Ah," said he to himself, "I

am afraid I have not got rid of the ‘secret faults’ yet.” He felt that he was proud. Perhaps this is what is called self-righteousness. Such were his thoughts, and so far they were undoubtedly right.

When he came to his room, the opening of the door awakened his two companions, who were not at all pleased with the interruption. Ned turned over with some violence, and gave Frank a very hard name. This did not please him, especially as he was more exalted in his own opinion than usual; he therefore replied, in a tone which immediately struck him as not being exactly proper. Ned was now displeased in his turn, and they were soon engaged in a boyish quarrel.

“ You are a pretty fellow,” said Ned, “ to be out till this hour of the night, and then to come stamping in, waking up those that are trying to sleep.”

Frank was nettled, but he commanded himself enough to reply: “ Now, Ned, you know very well that I have not been out of doors to-night.”

“ Ha! ha! A pretty story, indeed! How do I know but you have been spending an

hour at the theatre, or may be at the watch-house ? Eh ! Master Parson."

This was rather more than Frank could bear. " *You* should not say it, any how. Did you not persuade me ? Did you not almost force me there ? And then did you not leave me in the lurch ? I can tell you one thing—I am never going again ; and I can tell you another thing—wherever I go, I will go with my own money."

This was a home-thrust, for Ned had, only that very day, purloined a shilling from his employers, and his evil conscience made him feel as if he had been found out. So he flew out of the bed, knocked the lamp out of Frank's hand, and seized him by the collar. There is no telling what might have been the result, as the little country boy was very resolute and very angry; but Joe had waked up, in the meantime, and being stronger than either, pulled them apart, saying, " Let him alone, Ned; you know we have got him into one scrape already; and, what is more, the less you have to do with him the better."

It was long before Frank could compose himself for sleep. He had sunk in his own

estimation. He had flown into a passion, and had been almost engaged in a fight. And this had happened to him on the very day when he had made such good resolutions ! Yet he did not see the whole evil. He felt ashamed and sorry for these particular faults, which many persons would think no faults at all ; but he did not clearly perceive that the root of the evil was within. If the temptation had come upon him in another shape, it is likely he would have fallen in a different manner. The source of all was an evil nature, and an unregenerate heart, which would have led him to the greatest sins, but for the preventing grace of God.

The next day Frank was unhappy. He felt humbled in his own eyes. His companions would not speak to him ; but this did not trouble him half so much as his own sense of something wrong within. "How strange !" said he to himself, "that just at the time when I was trying to be so good, I should break out into such tempers, and even go to bed *without a thought of prayer.*"

In one of the upper lofts of the warehouse, there was a dark corner where the porter, a man of colour, used to keep an old Bible.

Frank sometimes saw him sitting there on a box, or a bale of goods, with a pair of rusty spectacles, trying to spell out a few verses. Cato was a poor reader; and this made Frank sometimes take the book, and read aloud to him. On the day we are speaking of, he found the old man at his usual task. He was puzzling over the seventh chapter of Romans. Frank very kindly took the book, and soon came to these words: "*For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.*"

"Do you know what that means?" said Frank.

"Yes, indeed, sir," answered the old man; "I understand it too well: and if you ever undertake to be good, in your own strength, you will know what it means, too."

These few words of the coloured porter sunk into his mind. This was an exact description of his own case. He had been *undertaking to be good in his own strength*; and he had learned his own weakness; and found out that a resolution is a very different thing from a reformation.

## CHAPTER V.

## SOLITUDE IN A CROWD.

Do you think anybody can feel lonely in such a city as New York, where there are hundreds and thousands of people? Yes, it is possible; and our Frank felt it to be his own case, as many a country boy has done before him. He met hundreds after hundreds in the streets; almost always looking brisk and animated, and often conversing and seeming happy. But as for him, he was alone. No one cared for him; scarcely anyone spoke to him. His employers never said a word to him, except to give him orders. It was the same with the elder clerks. The younger lads held their heads too high to have much to do with him; and their profane language made him willing to avoid them. At his lodgings he found no one who took the least interest in him.

It is one of the great evils of our city business, that the young men who are employed in warehouses and shops cannot be said

have any *home*, except in cases where they live with their parents. Where shall a poor boy go, when work is over? To the warehouse? It is locked up. To the house of his employer? He would as soon think of going to the house of the Mayor. To his boarding-house parlour? He is not expected there, and would often find no welcome. To his own chamber? It is small, dark, and cold. In truth, he has no home! And hence the temptation is so much the greater to spend the evenings in bad places.

Frank felt all this; and often did he think how different it was at Coventry. Father, mother, and sisters, were all gathered around the fire; neighbours were dropping in; good things were served round; there were kind looks, and gentle words. Oh, let no boy desire to leave his father's house, until called away by a plain duty!

One evening Frank felt the need of a walk, so he put on his coat, and proceeded up Broadway. This crowded street was brilliant with gas. The shop windows were far more showy than by day, and the multitude of persons was greater. Now and then, he would stop before a brighter lamp than usual; it was

at some oyster saloon, refectory, bowling-gallery, or café. These are the names given to various grog-shops. They are well lighted and well warmed, and hold out a powerful inducement to the shivering, the lonely, and the sad. But those who go there to drink away their sorrows are almost sure to perish, soul and body. Frank passed by.

Next he came to Park Row, and stood before the theatre. The row of lamps was bright. He could catch the sounds of fine music. Gay-looking people were going in or coming out. A crowd of boys surrounded the entrance, eager to be admitted, and clamouring for checks. Frank remembered the great posting bills which had told of the wonders to be seen and heard; but he passed on, feeling very solitary.

As he went further and further, he found the grog-shops more numerous, the windows less rich, the houses poorer, and the liquors more publicly displayed. At open doors he could hear the sound of merriment within. He saw boys of his own age coming out of these shining rooms, full of gaiety, and knew how easy it would be to go in himself. O parents! who send tender youth to cities, can

ye wonder that they fall into these snares! Frank felt very, very lonesome; but he passed on.

Weary of rambling, he at length turned to go home. A poor ragged boy offered him a small box, saying, "Three for a halfpenny—matches—please buy—please buy—I am hungry." "Other people are in trouble, besides me," thought Frank. He declined buying, and the child gave him a volley of curses. It shocked the country boy to hear such words, and made him even more afraid than before to make street acquaintances.

Old Cato once said to him, "Mr Frank, what is the reason that I never see you with any playmates?"

"I have no playmates, Cato. I used to have plenty of them in the country, but I am a stranger here."

"Have you got no friends?"

"Not any here, Cato. I have a good father, and mother, and sisters, in Coventry."

"Then you are poorer than I am. When I go to my poor house at night, I find a welcome. The stove is hot, and something is cooking on it. There I find my 'old woman' and three daughters. My boys come in during

the evening, and we have a dozen of friends looking in. We are all glad to see one another. I could not live without friends."

"Yes, Cato, you have a *home*; but I am a stranger."

"I often wonder," said Cato, "why the rich gentlemen don't do something to keep the young men out of mischief in the evenings. Boys are boys, they will have company. If they are not cheerful in some good place, they will go to some bad one. I wonder if masters will not have to answer for this to the Master of all."

To this Frank made no reply, for he thought as Cato did, and his mind was wandering away to his father's house, and the delightful winter evenings which he had spent there.

As he was entering Dey Street, on his return to tea, he met Ned and Joe, with a gang of about a dozen boys and men, very loud and merry. "Come, Frank," cried he, "come. There is to be a great poultry raffle in Leonard Street." This is a sort of lottery, in which the prizes are turkeys, ducks, and chickens; but the chief attraction is the liquor, which is given very freely.

Frank could not help thinking that it was

better to be lonely than to make merry in such company as this. He ascended to his room, lighted his bit of candle with a match, wrapped a blanket around him, and proceeded to read in *Pilgrim's Progress*—the only book which he possessed besides the Bible.

If the reader of these pages should ever become the employer of young men, I hope he will take pity upon those who are under his care, and at least find out what means they have of passing away their evening hours.

The circus, the theatre, the low concert, draw multitudes night after night. These persons afterwards become ripe for crimes. Boys in town, who have no one to look after them, are early tempted to such places. But if they love their own souls, they should resolve to avoid them, lest they be drawn into greater depths of iniquity. The nearest grocery to my house was robbed the other night by a boy in the shop, who rifled the money drawer. When the police were called in, they said at once, "He is probably at the circus;" and there, indeed, he was, as they found in the course of half an hour.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE VISIT.

Now, it is very likely (as I have said a good deal about religion, and about the bad ways of towns) that some of my readers think I am a sour old fellow, that would keep young people from every amusement. By no means, my young friends. You must have amusement of some kind or other; and it is because there are so many tempting and evil entertainments, that I so earnestly desire that an effort should be made in our cities to furnish you with such as are harmless.

Frank was growing too dull for a lad of his years. He felt the need of companions, and thought much of his sisters and cousins.

One morning Mr Buncombe stopped Frank, as he was on the stairs, and said to him, "My lad, how would you like to spend a day at your father's?" Frank's heart leaped within him. Forgetting the dignity of Mr Buncombe, he seized his hand, and said, "O,

sir, it would be too good! I should thank you for ever! But *can* I go? *When* shall I go?" "Next Thursday," replied his employer, "is Thanksgiving-day, and we have to close the warehouse. You may get ready to go the evening before; but, mind, you are to be here by ten o'clock on Friday, not a moment later. Do you see this watch? Not a moment later. Remember, Friday at ten." "O, yes, sir—yes, sir—Friday at ten,"—said the poor boy, scarcely knowing what he said.

It was as if a burden had been lifted off his young heart. You may be sure he counted the days and hours, until the happy moment. He was fluttering with fear lest something should turn up to hinder it. He counted up his little hoard of money in his pocket-book. Part of this he laid aside to pay his passage, the rest he appropriated to gifts for those at home. The first spare evening he spent in making purchases; and how he turned them over in his lonely garret! First, there was a large-print New Testament, with Psalms at the end, for his dear mother. Secondly, there was an ivory-headed cane, for his dear father. Thirdly, there was a box of colours for his sister Mary. Fourthly, there

was a gilt inkstand for his sister Ann. And fifthly, there was an ornamented powder-horn for Jonathan, who worked on the farm. His heart was very much engaged in this, and the feeling was good and praiseworthy.

When Tuesday night came, his red trunk was all packed, except the change of clothing which he was to wear, and he had been twice to the railway office, to be sure of the right place of starting. But he got scarcely a wink of sleep, and when he dozed a little, he was far away in Coventry.

At length the happy Wednesday dawned, and his first thought was that he should sleep that night under his father's roof. He ate little at the table, so that the landlady smiled, and told him he was *journey-proud*. Several times he made sad mistakes in his errands; for, poor fellow! his thoughts were in the country. A full hour before the time, he sallied out with his coat, umbrella, and bag, and the cane for his father, and was at the foot of Liberty Street before the ticket-office was open. He looked with a sort of gratitude on the whiskered man who gave him his ticket, and rushed on to the ferry-boat, as if he was afraid it would be off before him. He

was soon in the train the locomotive whizzed and smoked, and the train began to move. It seemed to him to move slowly, though they were going almost twenty miles an hour.

Darkness came on, and when they arrived at the place where he was to get out, the moon and stars were shining brightly. He alighted, and looked about him. He knew that he was expected. Presently he heard a familiar sound; it was the snort of old Roan, the family horse; and then he knew the creak of the wheels, as the little wagon drove rapidly round. His heart went pit-a-pat. With a husky voice, he said, "Who is it?" and in a moment he was in his father's arms. "Come, my son," said the old man, "let me look at you once more!" and he held his ruddy face in the light of the window. "Come, in with your bag—we have four miles to drive, you know—and your mother and the girls are waiting for you."

Frank seated himself, and gently took the reins out of his father's hand. It was his old place, and it had been long since he had handled the "lines." He knew every foot of the road, by day or night; and old Roan

pricked up his ears at the well-known voice, and trotted off like a colt.

"There," said Frank, "there is Mr Frost's house—I see the light in their sitting-room. And there is the old mill—and yonder is the school-house. And see! the moon is shining on the steeple of our church! And oh, there is our own lane—and the cherry-trees—and Towzer—I hear his bark!"

True enough, there was the lane, and there was Towzer, who almost stifled the boy, as he jumped down to open the gate. As soon as the sound of the wheels was heard, the door flew open, and out bounded two rosy-cheeked girls, who threw their arms around his neck. "Brother, brother!" was all they could say; but it was enough. In the door stood his gentle mother, trembling, with more than her lips could express. For an instant she held him off, gazing into his face, and then folded him to her bosom, whispering, "Thanks be to God!"

If there is a happy sight on earth, it is that of a loving family, united after separation. The large fire-place was piled with logs, which filled the room with their blaze. The circle was formed, and a thousand questions were

asked. Towzer lay upon the hearth, and looked in his young master's face. Impatient to open his stores, the red bag was unlocked, and Frank distributed his gifts. They were received with admiration and thanks. Jonathan came in, and shook him some seconds by the hand. Then, restless with joy, Frank must needs go into every room in the house, and afterwards out of doors, to see whether the barn and the dairy stood in their old places.

The supper-table was spread. The good father asked God's blessing. Frank praised the home-made bread, the milk, the preserves, and declared he had never sat at such a table in New York. Once again they all kneeled in family prayer; and when the grateful boy went to his well-remembered bed, he thought it was the happiest day of all his life.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### THANKSGIVING-DAY.

IT is the custom, in some parts of the country, for all the members of a family to come

together on Thanksgiving-day; and a very good custom it is. It serves to draw the bonds more closely between parents and children, brothers and sisters. This makes it a delightful day for many a youth, who is absent from his father's house all the rest of the year. So it was with Frank. After a night of sound sleep, he arose in the morning, refreshed and cheerful. By daylight, he could now look around on the familiar objects which had escaped him in the darkness. All gave him pleasure. He looked with satisfaction at the horses, the cattle, the flock of sheep, and the very fowls in the yard, which he used to feed. There was not a thing inside or outside of the house which did not bring up pleasant recollections. But most of all was he happy in the presence of his dear parents and sisters; and he saw his own joy reflected in their countenances. When all were summoned to morning prayers, he almost wept at the sight of the old family Bible and psalm-book; and when they kneeled in prayer, and he heard his aged father give thanks for the return of the only son, Frank could no longer contain himself.

We need not inquire minutely into the

country breakfast to which they sat down. Suffice it to say, it was bountiful, and Frank could not have been more happy if he had been a king. Of course they all went to the village church, to hear a sermon from Mr Miller. It was a plain building of stone, bout a hundred years old; but it was dear to Frank, for there he had been used to go ever since his infancy, and near it his grandparents were buried. There was great looking round among the people, to see who of the young folks had come home to spend thanksgiving; and when the service was over, it seemed as if there would be no end to the shaking of hands and asking of questions. Friends of his father, and old playmates gathered around Frank, and it was a full half hour before he could mount his pony for a return.

The company was now increased and the house was full. Four or five carriages and wagons drove into the lane at once, besides several persons on foot. There was uncle Joshua Harper, and the three aunts, sisters of his mother. There were several cousins, who came because their own parents were dead, and they had found a friend in farmer Har-

per. There was the schoolmaster, Mr Tree, who had no friends of his own. And there was Mr Millar, the clergyman ; who, being unmarried, was invited home to Mr Harper's. The fires were large, crackling, and blazing. All were in their best clothes and best temper ; and, as there was no constraint, the company was full of innocent glee.

Frank had a great desire to talk with his father about his religious anxieties. He therefore followed him to the stable, where he went to see after the dumb creatures. It is not unlikely that the old gentleman kept at this work longer than he would otherwise have done, in order to converse with his boy. But Frank's mouth was sealed on the great subject. Reverence for his father, joined to natural bashfulness, kept him from saying any of the things he had intended. Mr Harper gave his son much good advice. Frank, in his turn, related the whole affair of the theatre and the watch-house. His father did what every good parent would do in a like case ; he expressed his sorrow for the act, but he commended the candour of the confession. And, in reply to Frank's complaints about solitude, his father told him

that the best of all society was *Christian society*, and that he must try to gain the advantage of this. He therefore earnestly recommended to him to attach himself to some Sunday-school, without delay.

A Thanksgiving dinner in the country is no slight affair. My readers will not expect from me an account of the turkeys, the hams, the pumpkin-pies, the puddings, and the custards, under which the table groaned. One thing is certain, Mrs Harper and the girls had thought more of Frank, in their preparations, than of all the other guests. Several poor persons were waiting in the kitchen for their accustomed alms, and went away fully laden.

Then came the long afternoon and evening, around the noble wood-fire; when cheerfulness and friendship were mingled with religious communion and grateful praise. The crowded assemblies of the rich and great can shew nothing equal to such a scene; and there are a thousand such on every general Thanksgiving-day. The schoolmaster was also a singingmaster, and had brought his bass-viol; and though the girls had no piano-forte, several of them had sweet voices. The minis-

ter and uncle Joshua had fine bass voices, and Frank (though somewhat out of practice) resumed the tenor of his earlier days. Altogether it was a fine concert; and the auditors, who were at the same time performers, had quite as much enjoyment as the fine gentlemen and ladies who pay their crown to hear a foreign fiddler or a brace of painted madames.

Mary and Anne learned more about New York and its ways, that evening, than they had ever dreamed of before: their brother was now a great authority in their eyes; and they listened with wonder to what he told them about the shipping, the steamers, the immense stores, the churches, the museums, the fountains, the Croton-water, the fires, and the processions. To tell the truth, the girls were really all alive with desire to "go a-shopping" in Broadway. But ah! how many are there, who lament, when it is too late, that they ever trod the streets of a great city!

During a pause in the conversation, Frank became very pensive, and at length followed his mother into the little back-room, where she had taught him so many lessons before. Anticipating his wish (as mothers do), Mrs

Harper seated herself, and Frank did the same. There was something on his mind. He looked into his mother's eyes, and then upon the floor.

"Why, my son," said Mrs Harper, "what ails you? See! You have torn to pieces the beautiful daily rose, which Anne just now gave you."

Frank looked at the poor remains of the flower, as it hung from his fingers, and said, "I am very sorry; but mother, I was thinking of something else."

"Come then, my boy, and tell me what it is. I am afraid they do not treat you well in New York. You are more serious than you used to be. Is there anything of this sort to trouble you?"

"No, mother; but there is something I want to speak to you about."

"Then, my son, speak freely; you know I will help you in every way I can. Have you got into any debt, or into any quarrel?"

"Oh no!" said Frank, laying his head on his mother's shoulder; I tried to tell father but I could not; but I *can* tell you, mother. I am in trouble about what will become of my soul."

Mrs Harper was overcome with her emotions. She wiped away Frank's tears, while shedding many of her own. She advised him, she prayed with him, and before he went away she gave him two or three books and some tracts, and also procured a letter from Mr Miller, to introduce him to a worthy clergyman. It was a new cause of thanksgiving for this pious mother, on that day of rejoicing; and it was an unspeakable relief to the dutiful son, that he had opened his mind to one who loved him so well.

The happiest day must come to an end; and so it was with this one. The company separated, and though the snow had been falling for several hours, they went their different ways with much animation.

Not to stop for the painful farewell, let me say, that Frank was up long before day on Friday. His good father took him to a place in the road where he could enter the New Brunswick railway train; and, five minutes before ten, he reported himself to Mr Buncome, in John Street. The absence had done him good, and he felt stronger, both for labour and endurance, than before he went.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE HOUSE OF GOD.

THE bells were ringing for church on Sunday morning. The new chime of Trinity Church steeple was filling the air with its tune. Broadway, the great thoroughfare, was crowded with well-dressed people, who seemed to be going to church. Among these Frank mingled, with his book under his arm, and a letter in his hand, which he was to deliver to the Rev. Mr Halsted. At length, he reached Locust Street, and found himself in front of the church to which he had been directed. It was a lofty edifice of brown stone, with a row of columns in front, and a steeple of some height. The congregation had not yet begun to assemble, but he perceived that a large building in the rear was resorted to, by a number of persons. Frank ascended the steps, and addressed himself to a grave elderly gentleman, who was standing in the doorway. "Will you be so good as to tell me, sir, how

I shall find Mr Halsted, the minister of this church?"

"Nothing is more easy," replied the old gentleman, with a gracious smile, "I am the very person you are looking for."

"Indeed, sir! Then I have a letter for you, from Mr Miller of Coventry." Mr Halsted read the letter, and then taking Frank by the hand, led him into the church. He then called the sexton, and directed him to give Frank a seat, and to see that he was always provided with it. "I expect to see you here always—twice a day, my young friend; you know the saying, 'the rolling stone gathers no moss.' I expect you to be here in time. And I expect to see you at my house, next Wednesday evening, at eight o'clock, when I hope to become further acquainted with you."

Frank's seat was in the gallery, near the pulpit, so that he had a good view of the congregation as they came in. They seemed, for the most part, to be plain but respectable people. When the service began, and the whole assembly joined in singing the hymn, Frank was delighted, and united his own voice with that of the multitude. In the

prayers his mind was very much engaged; they appeared to be exactly suited to his case. When the minister rose to preach, he took for his text these words, "*Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.*" It was a simple but earnest discourse, on the power of the Holy Spirit to subdue the evil nature within us. Every word seemed to Frank as if it were meant for him. He wondered how Mr Halsted could have learned so much of his case. The preacher described just such feelings as he had had; just such efforts at reformation; and just such mortifying defeats. It was Frank's experience to a tittle. But he went on further to describe what Frank had *not* experienced. He spoke of a new nature; of the indwelling of the Spirit of God in the renewed soul; of grace to help in time of need; and of the work of sanctification. He explained what was meant by "walking in the Spirit," and shewed how this blessed Comforter and Sanctifier is given to every one of God's people, enabling them to do what they could not do of themselves. "I see," said Frank to himself, "that I have a great deal yet to learn. This new nature is what I have not received."

As he walked homeward, his anxiety appeared to him to be much renewed; yet he felt an unspeakable satisfaction in having a place of worship to which he could regularly go. He repaired thither again in the afternoon, and was again instructed, so that he could say of God's house, "*A day in thy courts is better than a thousand.*" In returning, he chose to walk homeward along the North River. How was he astonished to see the multitudes of young men and boys who were profaning the day. Scores of these were out riding; and, cold as was the day, numbers were crossing the ferries to New Jersey. Can such youths have any parents? Or can parents be so unfeeling, or so ignorant, as to let their sons come to town, without taking any care about their going to church?

*Every young man in a city should have some stated place of worship.* It is not enough that he go to church; he should go regularly to the *same* church. I do not say a word about its denomination. If the gospel is preached there in truth and simplicity, I am not concerned by what name they are called, only let him have some place which he

may call his own, and let him have his regular seat there.

A very large number of all the clerks and apprentices in New York are from the country. When they come to town they are strangers, and one church is to them the same as another. They wander about from place to place, until all regular habits are lost. I have known even professors of religion to spend months without forming any church connection; and some mournful cases have occurred, in which such persons have abandoned religion altogether.

One thing was very pleasing to Frank at the Locust Street church. A large part of the gallery was devoted to the children of the Sunday school, all of whom sat with their respective teachers. And among these teachers he saw a young man, who, he felt almost sure, was the very Mr Brooks who had given him a tract at the foot of Chambers Street. This may seem a small matter, but to a poor boy who wanted a friend, anything was delightful which offered the hope of finding one. Young men in town can have no such means of making valuable friends as those which are offered by their religious connections.

Frank determined to use all proper means to discover Mr Brooks. He ransacked his closet for the tract, on which he had written his place of business. At last he found it, and with much joy read the words,

B. B. BROOKS,

NO. 220 CASTLE STREET.

Now this, thought Frank, is what I may call a kind providence. For when Mr Miller directed me to Locust Street, I had no remembrance that Mr Brooks was a teacher in their Sunday-school.

The Lord's-day is a very sad time when spent among wicked people. So Frank found it at Mrs Moggs's. Two of her lodgers were Germans, who seemed to be infidels, and who played on violins a good part of the day; and in the evening a whist-table was commonly set out. They appeared to suspect Frank of something like religion, for in his presence they always talked a great deal about "saints," and "hypocrisy," and questioned

him concerning the church he attended. All this made him only the more sensible of his solitary condition, and caused him to long the more for some useful and Christian companion.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

IT was several days before Frank found leisure to pass through Castle Street. At last he made his way thither, and was much gratified to find Mr Brooks in his shop.

"Perhaps, sir," said Frank, "you do not remember me: I am the boy to whom you gave a tract, some time ago, at the foot of Chambers Street."

"O yes," said Mr Brooks; "and I thought I had met with you before, when I saw you last Sunday; for I spied you in the gallery; but was so busy with my boys that I could not look after you. But how did you come to our church?"

*Frank.* I had a letter to Mr Halstead, from our minister in the country—at Coventry.

*Brooks.* Ah, then you are one of Mr Miller's boys. We know him well. He was bred among us, and was once our superintendent. Now tell me, what brought you to me?

*Frank.* Sir, I liked your looks. You spoke kindly to me; and you seemed to care for me. Nobody else has done the like for me here.

A tear glistened in Mr Brooks's eye, as he took the boy by the hand, and said, "What friends have you in town?"

*Frank.* I have no friends but my employers; and I never see them out of the warehouse.

*Brooks.* Then you shall have *one* friend—and I give you my hand upon it. You might have gone to ruin; it is a mercy that you have not. Let me know your lodgings, and let me see you as often as you can. Perhaps you would like to be a teacher in our Sunday-school.

Frank blushed and said, "Not a *teacher*, sir, I know better than that; but I should like well to be a scholar."

"Then a scholar you shall be; and next Sunday, at eight o'clock, I will call for you; remember—for Sabbath time is more precious than gold—eight o'clock."

The Sabbath came round, and Frank was sitting in the little parlour, patiently awaiting his friend's call. When Mr Brooks entered he looked quite startled, for Ned and Joe were engaged in mending a pair of skates, and Mr Neidert was rendering the same service to some disabled chess-men; while one or two champagne-baskets, in the corner, bore witness to the habits of some of the inmates. They left the house together.

"And this is your boarding-house, Frank?"

"Yes, sir."

"And this is the way they spend the Lord's day!"

"A good deal too much of this, I must confess."

"And who directed you to the place?"

*Frank.* Why, you see, sir, my father had no acquaintances in town, so he went to Mr Bubble, who keeps a tavern in our village, and Mr Bubble directed him to a brother-in-law of his, in Washington Market, and last one brought me here.

*Brooks.* Ah, I see how it is! Thus it is that hundreds of young men come in from the country, and are ruined for want of proper guardianship. But this must have an end—you cannot live here any longer.

*Frank.* Why, sir, where can I live?

*Brooks.* You shall live with *me*, at a respectable, economical boarding-house, down town; so I advise you to make your arrangements immediately.

Though Frank did not know it, this was one of the most important steps which had ever been proposed to him. Little as he knew of his danger, however, he was overjoyed at the thought of escaping from such evils, and of being near such a friend. Would to God, that all pious young men, in cities, were awake to the importance of rescuing the youth around them from evil associations.

Arrived at the Sunday-school, Frank was surprised and astonished to find three large rooms filled with scholars. Mr Brooks modestly said that he did not think he was able to teach Frank so well as his friend Mr Rood, who had a more advanced class. So Frank was placed under the care of this gentleman, by whom he was kindly received, and

furnished with all the necessary books. The time passed away pleasantly, and he was sorry when the hour was over.

In the course of a few days Frank took his departure from Mrs Moggs's, and went to his new lodgings. They were new indeed ! For though he still had an attic room, he had it all to himself. He had a washstand, a chest of drawers, and a hanging-shelf. The land-lady was a pious widow, and the lodgers were all serious persons. The blessing of God was asked at their meals, and they had family prayer morning and night. Above all, he had in Mr Brooks, a judicious, experienced, and affectionate friend, to whom he could look up as to an elder brother. He had no sooner found himself alone in his little chamber, than he kneeled down, to thank God for this great and unexpected mercy.

Let the reader pause and think how much good he might do, by seeking out some friendless lad, and rescuing him from the temptations of a great city. For a youth away from home to find such a friend is better than to receive an inheritance of wealth. And let it be remembered, it is *religion* which inspires such benevolence, and makes such

friends. If, therefore, any youth in town is led to feel his need of such a guide and protector, the best and shortest rule I can give him is in these words : *Hasten to connect yourself with a good Sunday-school.*

Frank found the school a source of constant pleasure. It gave occupation to his mind. The lessons were not usually hard; and when he met with any difficulty, he had Mr Brooks in the house to aid him, who went with him to the minister's, where he was always cordially welcomed. He became acquainted with four respectable boys, who met with him, in Mr Brooks's room, every Saturday evening. At the prayer-meetings he saw himself surrounded by a company of youthful Christians, every one of whom was ready to take him by the hand. And, what was still better, these new associations, and the lessons which he received, tended to deepen those religious impressions which he had already received. Having been made to feel his own ignorance and weakness, he opened his mind to instruction with the simplicity of a little child. It seemed almost too good to be true, that a few days should have wrought so great a change in his circumstances and his feel-

ings; and he would have been perfectly happy if he had not been conscious of a burden on his soul which was not yet removed. He sat down in Mr Brooks's room, where there was a fire, and wrote a long letter to his father and mother; in which he gave them a full account of all that had taken place.

The next Sabbath was indeed a day of rest. He longed for the hour of school; and, when there, he was calm and full of satisfaction. He listened to the word of God with new interest; and, at Mr Brooks's suggestion, opened a little book, in which he might record so much as he could recollect of the sermons. How different a face would be put on our cities, if all the young men from the country, in shops and warehouses, were under a like influence!

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## CHAPTER X.

### EARLY TRIALS.

IT is not the way of Providence to let any one who is in the right way continue long with-

out trials. It was only a few weeks after the events last related, that Frank was surprised by a summons into the back-office, to meet Messrs Boggs and Buncombe. Such a thing had never happened before. These gentlemen looked very grave, and Mr Boggs began the conversation by saying: "What is this, my lad, that we hear about your boarding-house?"

*Frank.* Indeed, sir, I do not know what you mean.

*Mr Boggs.* Don't you live at No. 411 Dey Street?

*Frank.* No, sir. I *did* live there at first, but I changed my lodgings more than a month ago.

Mr Boggs looked at Mr Buncombe, and said, with a smile, "This is better than I thought. Look at that paper; you will see that two men have been arrested at that house for having entered several shops with false keys. They have been committed. Two boys also—Denton and Briggs—are under suspicion as accomplices, but have been dismissed for want of sufficient evidence. We were afraid they might be acquaintances of yours."

"I know them," said Frank, "but I know no good of them, and I have not laid eyes on them since I left the house."

Many thoughts came into Frank's mind on hearing this piece of news. He saw how near he had been to the greatest snares. He might at least have been involved in the most mortifying suspicions, and he thanked God that he had been rescued from such a peril. Now he began to understand the noises of hammering and filing, which he used to hear by day and night in Mr Niedert's room, and to see how Ned and Joe managed to be always so flush of money.

About dusk he was returning from the shop, when he was accosted by two young men, just in front of old Grace Church; he at once recognised them as his former chamber-fellows. While he was doubting whether he should stop or not, Joe seized him violently by the collar, and said, with a malignant sneer, "So you have been peaching, you young scoundrel—have you?"

"Perhaps I may answer you better," replied Frank, nothing daunted, "if you let me loose, and if you tell me what *peaching* means."

Joe here loosened his hold, and said, "Fool! peaching means *that*, and *that*, and *that*;" at the same time striking him with his fist; while Frank defended himself as well as he could.

Frank was now in difficult circumstances; he was no coward, and he was remarkably stout of his age. Against either of them, singly, he knew he could make very good battle, but two against one was foul play. Besides, he abhorred the thought of a street-fight; and, more than all, he saw no reason why he should beat and injure them, even if they had abused him.

"You are a sneaking informer!" cried Ned Briggs, "we know well enough who has put the police on the scent, but you'll find it was the worst day's work you ever did, when you carried tales against *us*."

Here Frank began to understand that they ascribed their detection to something which he had said, and he declared, with great truth, that he had known nothing about the matter until within a few hours.

Here he was interrupted by language which need not be repeated. Ned threw off his coat, and dared him to a fight. Frank felt the blood rush to his face, and was within

an ace of accepting the challenge. A crowd was already gathered, among whom were several persons who were ready to help on the mischief. After looking his opposer steadily in the eyes, Frank bit his lip, and said, "You have attacked me for nothing—I have done you no harm. If you touch me, I shall defend myself—but you shan't get me into a fight, so I mean to go quietly home."

As he turned away, the boys cried out, "Coward—coward!" and several of the bystanders joined in the cry. At the same time, Ned and Joe proceeded to seize upon him, with intentions of further violence. The result might have been unfavourable; if a man, passing by, had not stopped to see what was the matter, and recognised Frank. It was the principal clerk of a shop but a few doors from Boggs and Buncombe's. Being athletic, and, at the same time, well-dressed, Mr Clark was received with some respect, and succeeded in disengaging his young friend, and conducting him towards his lodgings.

"They have hit you in the mouth," said Clark, "it is bleeding."

Here the cries of "Coward! coward!" were again heard from the assailants.

"Never mind that," said Clark. "You have done well to keep clear of a fight, which would probably have lodged you in the watch-house. I will explain this matter to Mr Boggs, and he will take care that you are protected."

When Frank reached his boarding-house, he related the circumstances to Mr Brooks, who was much concerned.

"I am thankful," said he, "that it is no worse; and I am glad that these unruly fellows have not left their mark on your face."

And here he removed Frank's cap, and smoothed down the brown, curly hair, over a face which was crimson with excitement.

Frank did not care for the blows; nor, indeed, was he at all intimidated; but, to tell the truth, the name of *coward* had stung him deeply. Next day, he found that the story had got to the warehouse, and that the younger clerks had formed no very high opinion of his valour. This was an affliction to him, but he thought within himself, "I know I am *not* a coward, and my conscience is clear, so I will try not to mind what people think of me."

This was a wise determination. His employers, on Mr Clark's testimony, were fully satisfied, and commended him for his forbearance. It was scarcely a week before Ned and Joe were both convicted of a petty theft, and thrown into prison; and even the boys in the warehouse began to perceive that Frank had acted bravely as well as prudently.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### COURAGE.

ABOUT midnight, on the first of March, Frank was awakened by the heavy toll of the fire-bell. Almost immediately he heard the voice of Mr Brooks at his door.

"Frank! Frank! The fire is in the neighbourhood of your warehouse. I think we had better go and see."

Frank hurried on his clothes, and ran up to the fire. When they reached John Street, the whole row of buildings appeared to be in a blaze. After a few steps, Frank perceived, that although their shop was not on fire, it

was in imminent danger, as the houses on one side, and in the rear, were burning. Messrs Boggs and Buncombe were already on the spot; their own safe and books were brought out, and all hands were employed in removing the valuable goods. Few scenes are more exciting than a city fire. The bells, the noise of the firemen, the gathering of crowds, the working of the engines, and the adventures of brave fellows upon the burning houses, make it almost like a battle.

Frank set himself to work with resolution. The upper lofts were filled with costly goods, and he almost exceeded his strength in labouring to remove them. At last, the roof of the house in the rear fell in, and a column of smoke and flame ascended to the skies. The cry was given that their own roof had caught; and the walls were heated like an oven. Now was the time for Frank to shew himself a man. He was the most bold and agile in the company. His country climbing had given him firmness of footing, and he was foremost on the roof, and far out on the edge, spreading wet blankets and cloths upon the shingle covering.

"Who is that lad?" cried several men below. "See!—he is standing on the extreme point! What madness!—he will certainly fall! Who can it be?"

"That," said Mr Clark, "is the boy who was called a *coward*." And the young clerks who had sneered at him, now looked up at his daring, and were silent.

But Mr Boggs saw that Frank was imprudent, and therefore directed him to other services which were equally important. They had the satisfaction of seeing their shop saved; and towards morning one of the partners called Frank, and putting into his hand a portfolio of valuable papers, said, "Here, Frank, I give you these papers to carry to my house in Waverley Place, for I know you are a trusty and a brave boy." Frank's face glowed at the commendation. Perhaps he had ventured more than he ought to have done, because he knew his courage had been suspected. But now he had been placed in circumstances where none could doubt it.

The few days which followed were occupied in a great variety of unusual labours, occasioned by the fire. In this Frank was

enabled still more to commend himself to his employers, who saw that he was both willing and competent, and that he really looked on their interest as his own. It is not surprising, therefore, that they made him a very handsome present.

When a young man comes into favour, it is wonderful how suddenly low and vulgar minds change their opinion of him. So it was with Frank. The young clerks sought his acquaintance. But this did not alter his behaviour to them: he was civil now as he had been civil before. John Small, the youngest of them, was so polite as to invite him to join a Sunday excursion to Coney Island! Frank not only declined, but explained to John the reasons upon which he did so. Samuel Roe offered him a chance of seeing a grand boxing-match, at the Hall of Novelty, in Pearl Street, which he treated in like manner.

With Mr Brooks his intercourse was of a very different kind. Frank knew that he was a true Christian, and one who had his welfare at heart. They spent much time together, in walking and talking, and in studying the word of God.

## CHAPTER XII.

## CONVICTION.

How lovely a sight is youthful devotion! There are those who most admire the glow of boyhood, in sports or learning. But it is more interesting still to behold a youth bowed in solitude before God in prayer. And the sight is one which gives joy in heaven.

Frank Harper would have seemed already a good boy, to any who should have seen him. Especially during the last few weeks, he had been making earnest endeavours to walk in the right way. But every step he took appeared to him to reveal some new evil in his nature.

It was an excellent custom of Mr Brooks to spend some hours of every week in looking up children for the Sunday-school. In these visits, he sometimes took Frank along with him. On one occasion they went into a dark, ill-looking court, and up a crazy staircase, into the room of an Irish family. In an in-

ner room (or rather closet), a poor man was lying ill with consumption. He looked as if he could not live more than a few days longer. When he was asked what hope he had for the future, he made a reply, which is, alas! too common, "I think I shall go happy, for I have never done any one any harm." When they left the house, Frank said—"How could O'Brien talk so! It is as if he would be saved without a Saviour. Ah! that is not the way I feel. If I am ever saved, it must be by being *pardoned*."

In so saying, Frank was sincere. Others thought him good; but he thought himself a sinner. He was much engaged in what is called *self-examination*; that is, in looking over his past actions and life, and into his character and heart. And the more he looked, the more he detected the evil that was in them. He saw that his good actions had not been done from good motives. He remembered the sins of his youth. He felt that he had more to answer for than others, on account of his religious education. He was alarmed at the demands of the law which he had broken, and perceived that nothing but perfect obedience could satisfy it. God appeared to him

as a God of infinite holiness, who could not take pleasure in sin. He was much employed in confessing his sins and bewailing the weakness of his nature. In these troubles, he opened his mind very freely to Mr Brooks.

"I am glad," said Frank, one day, "that Christ spoke the parable about the Publican and the Pharisee. No prayer in the Bible suits my case so well as this, *God be merciful to me a sinner!*"

*Brooks.* Yes, the Bible is the sinner's own book. It is made for sinners, just as medicine is made for those who are diseased. "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Take your Bible, Frank, and put a mark in each of the following places: you will find them good to be recommended to persons in a thoughtful state of mind. (The places were, Job xlvi. 1-6; Psalm xiii., xxxviii.; PSALM FIFTY-FIRST; Psalm lxix.; Isaiah i., iv., liii.; Luke xv.; 1 Tim. i. 15.)

*Frank.* I will carefully observe them. Sometimes I fear I am not enough in earnest: but one thing I am certain of, Mr Brooks, the burden of my sins grows heavier and heavier.

*Brooks.* So did Christian's, in the Pilgrim's Progress. You have read Bunyan?

*Frank.* Yes, some time ago; but I must read it again, for now I better understand what it means. It seems to me as if I were still in the Slough of Despond.

*Brooks.* Do not forget what Christian did. Bunyan says, "Still he endeavoured to struggle to that side of the slough that was farthest from his own house, and next to the wicket-gate." Whatever you do, do not go back.

*Frank.* I hope not! But I do not seem to go forward. At first, I saw a few sins, but now they seem like the stars of heaven. That voice is always in my ears, *Fly from the wrath to come!*

While Frank was thus exercised in mind, Mr Brooks took him to a little meeting of Christians, which assembled weekly at the house of a poor but excellent man, whose name was Grove. Mr Grove had been a truly active servant of Christ, but was now laid up with a painful lameness. It was therefore an act of kindness for his friends to meet at his house, and the little company always felt repaid for coming.

Frank had not before seen much of that

intimate fellowship which exists among believers. He was now struck with the warmth and freedom of their intercourse. They came together as brethren; they conversed on the most cheering of all subjects; they sung God's praises, and they kneeled together in prayer.

"Oh how sad it is," thought Frank, "that all here should be able to rejoice in God, except me! I wonder why I was brought here!—I am like an Achan in the camp."

Presently the conversation turned on conviction of sin, and one or two of those present gave some account of their own early exercises. Frank was interested to find that the feelings which he had supposed to be peculiar to himself, had been shared by all these friends. And he was much struck with a remark of old Mr Grove, which was this:—

"No man can derive solid joy from looking into his own unrenewed heart. For what can he see there but sin? and sin is his greatest evil. He must look out of himself; and whither can he look but to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world?"

That night was a night to be remembered by Frank Harper; for it was one of fear and weeping. Often did he endeavour to look at the word of promise, but his sins seemed to rise over his head like billows, and obstruct the sight.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## LETTER I.

*To Mrs Abigail Harper.*

New York, April —, 1845.

DEAR MOTHER,—I hope you will not be frightened when I tell you that I am sitting up in bed to write to you: and if the writing is not very good, you will please to remember, that I have my left arm bandaged up. But first of all, be sure to take notice that I am doing very well, and Dr Smith says that no permanent evil will result from it. But I forget that you have not yet heard any of the

particulars. Last Friday week I was coming up Exchange Place, which is a very narrow street, as well as quite steep, along with a young man named Brooks, who boards with us. All at once I saw a small wagon coming furiously in the opposite direction, with a young woman in it. The horse was running away, and the driver had been thrown out. I never thought a moment, but dashed into the street and tried to stop the horse by throwing up my hands. I then seized the bridle, which broke in my hands, and I was thrown under the wheel. The check given to the horse made it more easy to stop him at the next corner; so the young woman escaped. But when I got up I found that my arm was broken. Mr Brooks took me safely home, and a surgeon was sent for, who set the bone, and put the limb in a splint. I have suffered a good deal of pain, but I think I have not grumbled. It is a mercy that my life has been spared.

My dear mother—I have thought much of what I talked with you about when I was at home. Nobody knows how much it has been on my mind since I have been lying on this bed. It is wonderful to me that I should

have spent so many years in thoughtlessness, especially when I consider all the instructions I have received from you and my father. I have had a long conversation with Mr Halsted, the minister, which has only served to open my eyes to my sinfulness. Oh pray for me, my dear mother, that I may become a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I intend to write also, by the same hand, to my father, so I will now subscribe myself  
your affectionate son,

F. HARPER.

#### LETTER II.

*To Mr Isaac Harper, Coventry.*

New York, April 15, 1845.

DEAR FATHER,—You will learn from my letter to mother what has befallen me. It is rather tiresome lying in bed, but I now begin to have more freedom. Mr Boggs has been to see me, and Mr Wickes, the book-keeper, comes in every day. But no one has been so kind to me as a Mr Brooks, a very good young man, who was with me at the time I was hurt. He gives me good advice, and helps me in every way. Since I came to know him, I have not been so lonesome. If

I had not got into the company of real Christians, I might have been a poor solitary fellow to this day, or else I might have gone into bad places, which would have been a great deal worse. There are gentlemen who go about distributing tracts all over town, and one of them has been very kind to me since I have been laid up. I wish you would present my respects to Mr Miller, and say that his letter to Mr Halsted has been of great service to me.

I am, dear father, your dutiful and affectionate son,

F. HARPER.

### LETTER III.

*To Miss Mary Harper.*

New York, April 16, 1845.

MY DEAR SISTER MARY,—I never wrote so many letters in my life as since I have had my arm crippled; which makes me glad it is not my right one. I dare say you and Anne will have a good cry about it; but you need not, for it is all over, and I am getting well. Besides, these things are not half so bad as they are supposed to be. Did you not find this true, when Dr Rose pulled your tooth?

You will find it so all your life. Mr Brooks has been putting a curtain to my window (I have but one) to keep out the sun. I wish you could see the sewing! He calls it *bachelor-stitch*. Give my love to my cousins Phœbe and Jane, and little Patty. Tell George he need not be so eager to come to New York, for he will soon get used to the sights, and then he will wish he was in the country again. Particularly if he should happen to be sick. Mr Brooks has a book of poetry which says, "God made the country, and man made the town;" and I have found out that it is true. But we must be contented with our lot. My dear Mary, be obedient to your parents, and mind all they say about religion. Now that I am away from them, I feel very sorry for my negligence when I was at home. Write to me, and remember your affectionate brother,

F. HARPER.

LETTER IV.

*To Miss Anne Harper.*

MY DEAR LITTLE SISTER ANNE,—How I wish I had you by me! You could conquer

me now, for I am deprived of one arm. You have heard how it was. I thought I could stop the horse with ease, for he did not look much more spirited than our Roan; and after he stopped, he looked as sober as could be. But he was dashing down hill, and I was not as strong as I fancied.

I suppose you have many signs of spring in the country. Here I do not hear any birds except cage-birds. There are many of these. A man in John Street, named Grieve, has the most wonderful collection of birds. Sometimes you may see a hundred together. His parrots used to converse with me every day, as I went to the shop. Tell Jonathan, that if he would send some of his pheasants to market, he would get a good price for them. And if you and Mary would get him to set you out a strawberry bed of your own, it might do a good deal towards supporting you.

Good-bye, dear Anne; I am ever your affectionate brother,

F. HARPER.

## LETTER V.

*To Mr Theodore Free.*

MY DEAR TEACHER,—I have been writing to all my relations at home, and now I feel a wish to fulfil my promise to you. Often do I think of the good advice you used to give me; and much of it has been of use to me already. Your lessons in writing are likely to be very serviceable to me, just as you prophesied. Mr Buncombe saw a bill which I copied, and said, “My boy, that is a clerkly hand, and fit for a bank-ledger. That comes of the old-fashioned ciphering books!” Mr Brooks says, that first-rate handwriting is worth a hundred a year to a young man in business.

I have forgotten some of my geography; but when our fine goods come in from France, it is pleasant to me to know the places. A gentleman was here the other day from Lyons, on the Rhone. Mr Boggs has been there twice, and sends letters out there several times a year.

Do you remember, sir, what you used to tell your boys about arithmetic? “Boys, mind the FOUR RULES: they are the North,

South, East, and West, of your compass;" or "Boys, mind the FOUR RULES; the cornerstones are *Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, and Division.*" I am glad enough that you kept us so long in Addition, when I see the enormous rows of columns which our clerks have to add up. And how quickly they do it—like counting marbles! And how sure they are that the total is right—*without proving*. They say that old Mr Smith, the rich man of Canandaigua, once took his son to the top of a hill which overlooked his immense estate, and said to him: "Tom, do you want to know what made me the owner of all this? I will tell you in one word—ARITHMETIC." One of Mr Boggs's sayings is, "Bad ciphering makes half the bankrupts."

But you must not think that my mind is quite taken up with money-making; though it is the chief thing talked about here. Mr Halsted says there is a golden idol in Wall Street, as truly as ever there was in the plain of Dura. I hope I shall never forget your counsel about the things of another world. Sir, I should like to have more of them, in a letter; for I have been thinking more of these things than I used to do. And, to tell you

the truth, I am often very much discouraged. For all my endeavours to make myself better seem to be in vain; and I can only cast my poor sinful soul at the feet of Infinite Mercy, saying, Lord, help! or I perish!

I am, dear sir, your respectful and obliged pupil,

F. HARPER.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE PASTOR.

THE door of Frank's room opened, one day, and who should come in but good Mr Halsted! He was a tall and dignified old gentleman, with silver hair, and a countenance expressive of benignity and happiness. Frank was a little embarrassed, for his room was not in very good order, and his dress was scarcely neat enough for company. But he had good sense enough to make the best of it, and to offer no apologies.

Mr Halsted made some kind inquiries about Frank's accident, and commended his courage. He then went on to relate some-

thing of the same sort which had once befallen himself, and told some anecdotes about his early life in the country, which pleased Frank so much that he soon felt quite at his ease. The old gentleman came, by slow degrees, to speak of the most important of all subjects, and said to Frank that he ought to consider this dispensation of Providence as a new call on him to consecrate himself entirely to the Lord, his Preserver. To this Frank modestly replied, that he had felt his obligation so to do. The conversation which then followed brought Mr Halsted to understand the state of Frank's mind, as it has been described in the foregoing pages. I will record some parts of their conversation.

*Mr H.* You see that there is no way of escape, except by mere mercy, and that you might be justly condemned. My dear boy, this is what is called *conviction of sin*.

*Frank.* Yes, sir, you have described my case, but I have heard you say in your sermons that many persons are convinced who are never converted.

*Mr H.* That is true enough. I do not wish to persuade you that you are converted

when you are not. You are right, conviction is not conversion.

*Frank.* Oh ! then, sir, what must I do to be saved ?

*Mr H.* I could answer that question at once, and in the words of Scripture: but at present I wish to lead you to see what it is you need. You probably have endeavoured to reform your life ?

*Frank.* Yes, sir, I have endeavoured ; but it has only shewn me my own weakness.

*Mr H.* How do you suppose a sinner is to be saved ?

*Frank.* I suppose it to be by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Mr H.* Have you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ ?

*Frank.* I fear, sir, I have not.

*Mr H.* Your feeling, then, is, that you are not fit to come to Christ ?

*Frank.* Exactly so.

*Mr H.* And are you trying to fit yourself ?

*Frank.* Yes—no—indeed, sir, I scarcely know how to answer.

*Mr H.* But I will answer for you ; the case is a very common one. If you think you

must be *more* contrite, *more* humble, *more* grieved, *more* sensible of the weight of sin, before you can be justified, is to lay your contrition, your grief, your humiliation, for the foundation of your being justified—at least, for a part of the foundation.”

*Frank.* But what am I to do?

*Mr H.* Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Frank.* But may I come just as I am?

*Mr H.* Certainly—you would not seek first to be saved from your sins, and then come? “Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” “And whosoever will let him take the water of life freely.” “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acception, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”

*Frank.* There, sir! I see there is no lack of promises, and I begin to see the whole thing in a new light. I have been trying to make myself better: I have been trying to be my own saviour.

Mr Halstead saw that the word of God was taking its proper effect on the mind of his young friend. He therefore brought the conversation to an end. They both kneeled in prayer, and when the pastor went away he left a tract entitled *Poor Joseph*. After musing a little on what had been said, Frank took up the tract, and read as follows:—

“A poor, unlearned man, named Joseph, whose employment was to go on errands and carry parcels, passing through London streets one day, heard psalm-singing in a place of worship, and went into it, having a large parcel of yarn hanging over his shoulders. It was Dr Calamy’s church, St Mary’s, Aldermanbury. A very well dressed congregation surrounded the doctor. He read his text from 1 Tim. i. 15:—‘This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.’ From this he preached in the clearest manner the ancient and apostolic gospel, the contents of this faithful saying, that there is eternal salvation for the vilest sinners, only through the worthiness of Jesus Christ, the God that made all things. Not many rich, not many noble, are called by this

doctrine, says the apostle; ‘but God hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the things that are mighty.’

“While the gay and thoughtless part of the congregation listlessly heard this glorious truth—and, if they were struck with anything, it was only with some fine expression or well-turned sentence that the doctor uttered—Joseph, in rags, gazing with astonishment, never took his eyes from the preacher, but drank in with eagerness all that he said; and trudging homeward, he was heard thus speaking with himself: ‘Joseph never heard this before; Jesus Christ, the God who made all things, came into the world to save sinners like Joseph; and this is true, and it is a “faithful saying.”’

“Not long after this, Joseph was seized with a fever, and was dangerously ill. As he tossed upon his bed his constant language was, ‘Joseph is the chief of sinners, but Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and Joseph loves him for this.’ His neighbours who came to see him wondered, on hearing him always dwell on this, and only this. Some of the religious sort addressed him in the following manner: ‘But what say

you of your own heart, Joseph ? Is there no token of good about it ? No saving change there ? Have you closed with Christ, by acting faith upon Him ?' Ah no,' says he, 'Joseph can act nothing—Joseph has nothing to say for himself but that he is the chief of sinners ; yet, seeing that it is a 'faithful saying' that Jesus, He who made all things, came into the world to save sinners, why may not Joseph, after all, be saved ?'

"One man finding out that he heard this doctrine from Dr Calamy, went and asked the doctor to come and visit him. He came, but Joseph was now very weak, and had not spoken for some time, and though told of Dr Calamy's arrival, he took no notice of him ; but when the doctor began to speak to him, as soon as he heard the sound of his voice, he instantly sprang upon his elbows, and seizing him by his hands, exclaimed as loud as he could with his now feeble and trembling voice, 'Oh, sir ! you are the friend of the Lord Jesus whom I heard speak so well of Him. Joseph is the chief of sinners ; but it is a "faithful saying," that Jesus Christ, the God who made all things, came into the world to save sinners, and why not Joseph ? Oh ! pray to that Jesus

for me, pray that He may save me: tell Him that Joseph thinks that he loves Him, for coming into the world to save such sinners as Joseph.'

"The doctor prayed; when he concluded, Joseph thanked him most kindly; he then put his hand under his pillow, and took out an old rag, in which were tied up five guineas, and putting it into the doctor's hand (which he had kept all this while close in his), he thus addressed him: 'Joseph, in his folly, had laid this up to keep him in his old age; but Joseph will never see old age; take it, and divide it amongst the poor friends of the Lord Jesus; and tell them that Joseph gave it to them for His sake who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.'

The narrative was new to Frank, and made a deep impression on his mind. He thought of little else during the remainder of the day. Poor Joseph had taught him the great lesson of looking away from himself to the Lord Jesus Christ; and when he fell asleep that night he seemed to have forgotten himself, so fully was he absorbed in contemplating the excellency and grace of the Redeemer.

## CHAPTER XV.

## A REMARKABLE CHANGE.

IT was a trial of patience to Frank to be kept so long in his room, and it is probably wearisome to the reader to hear so much about it. We shall therefore hasten to the time when he was able to return to his business.

The month was May, and the season was delightful. How refreshing is it to the invalid, after long confinement, to breathe the balmy air of spring! Frank felt this as he walked with his faithful friend upon the Battery. The trees were putting forth their early leaves. A gentle breeze just ruffled the surface of the spacious bay, which was ploughed in every direction by vessels of every size. Numbers of small sail-boats shot along, skimming the waters as if they had been alive. At intervals, the whiz of a steam-boat, as it speeded by, broke in upon the stillness. A ship of the line (the North

Carolina) was lying in the stream, a noble object, looking as if it were almost irresistible. There was also an Italian vessel at anchor, dressed with gay flags and streamers on every mast and yard, in honour of the birth-day of the king of Naples. Other objects added to the interest of the scene. On this side stretch the masses of building of the city, with wharfs and a forest of masts. Yonder is Governor's Island, with its green slopes and fortifications, from which the roll of the drum may be heard. Further in the distance are the hills of Jersey, and the bold shore of Staten Island, sparkling with villas; and then, far away, the opening to the Atlantic, which is known as the Narrows. A soft sunshine played on the whole, and the multitude of sounds, on the water and the land, mingled into a pleasing murmur.

Sometimes sitting, and sometimes walking, the two friends talked of the objects around them, but gradually came round to that which was most dear to them both.

"I do not know how it is," said Frank, "but I never enjoyed these sights so much before: often as I have been here. Every thing has a new appearance. The air is more

sweet and refreshing, and I feel as if I loved all that I see."

Brooks looked kindly on the placid face of his young companion, but said nothing.

"Is it right to feel so happy?" continued Frank, "every thing within me seems quiet, like that smooth water of the bay. It is very peaceful and very delightful; but is it right?"

"It is certainly not wrong," replied Brooks, "to feel peaceful and happy. There is a peace of God that passes all understanding. The 'fruit of the Spirit is *peace*.' If you have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, all is well. Let me ask you a question—what do you feel towards God?"

Frank hesitated a little, as if afraid to answer so important a question hastily, and then said, with a low voice, "I think I love God. I see Him in every thing. Every thing seems dearer to me because He made it, and because He is present with it. Formerly I did not think much about God; now He appears always near; and it is pleasant and easy to pray within myself."

"What do you feel towards the Lord Jesus Christ?" inquired Brooks.

Frank's cheek reddened, and his eyes filled

with tears; but a smile played upon his lips.  
“Oh, I cannot tell you! He has died for me!  
I think He has saved my soul. I am filled  
with shame and sorrow for the way in which  
I have treated Him. But I desire to throw  
myself at His feet and give myself away to  
Him, for ever and ever.”

“Then I suppose, Frank, you think your-  
self a great deal better than you once were—”

“Do not speak of it! I see my own weak-  
ness and vileness more than ever. I see my  
need of the fountain that is opened for sin  
and transgression. I cannot compare myself  
to anything but a poor, weak little child;  
God must hold me up with His hand; I can-  
not go alone.”

“How then,” said Brooks, “do you expect  
ever to be saved? If you have no strength,  
and no righteousness of your own, how can  
you satisfy God’s holy law?”

“Christ has satisfied the law for me. He  
has died on the cross, and borne my sins in  
His own body on the tree. He has brought  
in an everlasting righteousness. He is able  
and willing to save the chief of sinners.”

“Do you believe this, Frank?”

“How can I help believing it! The pro-

mise of the gospel is plain—very plain. It shines like a bright light. If I do not believe it, I must disbelieve God."

"But, Frank, every one does not believe it; *you* did not always believe it. What great things have you done to make you so much better than others?"

Frank looked steadily in his face, with an air of surprise, and answered quickly,

"I have done no great thing—I am no better than others; but I think—I believe—that God has shewn me mercy, and has sent His Holy Spirit to make me see my sins, and to make me see the willingness of Christ to save me."

"My dear fellow," said Mr Brooks, "I am really thankful that you have been thus wrought upon. You cannot trust in God too much, nor rejoice in God too much; but remember, you must be prepared for head winds and stormy weather."

## CHAPTER XVIL

## PROVIDENCE.

LONG before the point of time at which we have arrived, Frank had lost all traces of home-sickness and discontent. The novelty of a town life had worn off; but he had in the same degree become familiar with his business, and with the ways of a commercial city. He was so industrious and punctual, so neat and quick-handed, so good at accounts, and so true and trusty, that his employers were every day putting into his hands little pieces of business, which had hitherto been committed to the elder clerks. Thus it is that faithfulness in one's calling leads to a good name and to promotion.

How different it was with his early town acquaintances, Ned and Joe! In reading a morning paper, one day, Frank's eye alighted on the following paragraph in the police report:—

“ Grand Larceny.—Captain Wills, and

constable Milton, of the sixth ward, arrested yesterday, at the house of Jane Moggs, corner of Dey and Threadneedle Streets, two young fellows, named Joseph Denton and Ned Briggs, on a charge of robbing a Mr Louis Dampier, while at the island of Port-au-Prince, of four bills of the Bank of France for £40 each, with a promissory note, drawn by a Mr Choux of Paris, made payable at the order of Dampier. On searching their persons and trunks all the money was found in their possession, except about £6, expended in the purchase of clothing, and a watch which they had bought with the stolen money."

But though Frank was contented, he was not altogether free from anxiety. He began to perceive that something was wrong in the house with which he was connected. Several of the young men were discharged. A great sadness hung over the two principals. At length, one morning, before he left his lodgings, Frank received a note, by the hands of old Cato, informing him that Messrs Boggs and Buncombe had no further need of his services. In a word, their store had been closed by the creditors.

Frank was thus, all on a sudden, deprived of employment. He was the more embarrassed, because his friend, Mr Brooks, had been several weeks absent, on a tour through the Southern and Western States, preparatory to going into business for himself. After musing sadly over the case, he saw no way open for him, but to pack up his trunk and return to his father's house. Perhaps Providence, which had befriended him thus far, would open some path of usefulness. At any rate, he should see his honoured parents, and his dear sisters; and perhaps he might take another quarter in good Mr Tree's school, to perfect himself in geography, history, natural philosophy, and double entry.

The ways of Providence are wonderful, and he who observes them will find it true, even in the days of his youth. Frank had risen early in the morning, and was soon on his way to the ferry. His emotions were of a mingled nature: sadness at leaving his place of employment—joyful hope of rejoining the circle at home. He suddenly thought of stopping at the post-office, and there he found a letter addressed to him by his friend Mr Brooks. On breaking the seal, he was at

once thrown into a flutter. It informed him that Mr Brooks was about to open a store in Fulton Street, and the letter went on to say: "I have engaged the services of a young cousin of mine, for my little business; but you know I shall need a clerk and salesman; and I know no one, my dear Frank, whom I would rather have near me than yourself. If, therefore, you can consent to cast in your lot with mine, how delightful it will be! For the present, the utmost I can afford you is £50 a year; but this is rather more than you have been receiving from Boggs and Buncome. Direct to me at Louisville, and let me know your determination."

Frank scarcely knew which way to turn. His first thought was to go back to his lodgings; but, on consideration, he determined to carry out his previous intention of visiting his parents; especially as it would be some weeks before he should have any business in town. His heart swelled with gratitude to God for this most seasonable interposition, and he went on his way with spirits which made the journey one of unexpected pleasure.

The arrival of Frank spread joy through the farm-house at Coventry. His father, who

was in the corn-field, saw him first, and left the plough, to welcome his only son. His mother was knitting by the kitchen fire; she scarcely believed her eyes, when the tall and handsome youth who entered proved to be her own Frank. Mary and Anne bounded in from the dairy, and threw their arms about his neck. Jonathan shook his hand with a vehemence which almost put his wrist out of joint; and the old dog leaped as high as his head, and covered him with violent caresses.

Most of the day was given up to these domestic joys. There was much to be told, and more questions were asked than could be answered. Frank gave a detailed account of his recent history, interspersed with many new traits of city life. All agreed that he had been the special care of Providence. He also found that he could comprehend and estimate the humble piety of his parents, in a manner altogether unknown to him before.

By the advice of his father, Frank determined to spend the few remaining weeks in such active exercise as might strengthen his system, after the confinement of the city. He therefore put on a suit of homespun, and turned in upon the work of the farm. The

thoughts of his childhood came to him again, when, during the fine weather of early summer, he walked slowly after the plough, enjoying the fragrance of the fresh earth and the green corn ; or when he swung the scythe among the first cutting of the rich meadows. The dewy mornings were sweet to him beyond expression, and he seemed to inhale vigour with every breath. And then, when work was over, how charming were the evenings at the old porch, overgrown with honeysuckles and clustering roses, amidst the circle of those whom he most loved !

Thus rolled away five or six pleasant weeks, when, one afternoon, who should alight before Mr Harper's door but Mr Brooks. Frank was overjoyed to recognise his old friend, from whom he soon learned that he was ready to commence business, and that Frank was henceforth to be employed in his store, and to be an inmate of his family ; for, among other arrangements of life, Mr Brooks had married a prudent and very agreeable Christian lady.

The parents were much pleased with Frank's prospects.

"Don't thank me !" said Brooks, "you owe

me no thanks at all. I am consulting my own pleasure and interest. I know Frank, and he knows me; we shall go well in the traces together."

We need not follow our young friend into the further details of his history. His new connection was all that he could wish. Both he and his employer humbly endeavoured to honour God in their worldly calling, and God was pleased to smile on their business.

Let the youthful reader learn, that "by humility and the fear of the Lord, are riches and honour, and life."

## Eva's Trial.

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THE pleasant summer was past ; the autumn had faded into the chill of winter ; the children had begun to enjoy the cheerful amusements of snow-houses and snow-men, and the more active play of sliding and coasting. Eva took an active part in those amusements, and used to look very pretty with her little blue hood and warm gray cloak and fur tippet, ruling the others as well as joining heartily in their play. She had such a sweet and winning way of speaking, her voice was always so gentle, and she was so ready to sacrifice her own pleasure to theirs, that the children rarely failed to listen to her voice, and do as she bid them, so that their mother felt quite easy about their good behaviour

and safety, if 'sister Eva' was only with them. But Eva, gentle and good as she was, was not perfect, and the lesson of her own weakness was to be taught to them and her.

One day she came in, from playing with snowballs, with a severe pain in her eyes and head. It continued for some hours so very severe, that they sent for their physician, who immediately inquired if she had looked much at the fresh snow. When he heard where she had been, he said that the glare of the snow had affected her eyesight, and that she must be kept very close from it, and even be confined for some days in a dark room, and if she was not very careful, she might lose the sight of her eyes entirely.

Poor little girl ! She suffered much from the pain in her eyes ; and then to be obliged to be alone in a dark room, not being able even to have her brother and sisters playing in her room for their noise, was very hard. Her mother staid with her as long as she could, and her father came into her room every night, as soon as he came home from his business, and rocked her in his arms till she fell asleep. Lucy and Ben would come to her door as often as they could get per-

mission, and whisper how sorry they were that she could not be with them, and how sadly they missed her from school. But this always made her feel the more sad.

They had just commenced going to a little school near their home. The teacher was very kind, and tried both to interest and instruct them. So they loved her dearly; Eva had the first place in her class, which was the first class in school, and was very fond both of study and reading. Now being obliged to leave school, where she was so happy, without being able to look at a book at home, was more than the little girl was able to bear patiently.

It was no small trial to her besides to be away from her brothers and sisters. She was very fond of them, and had always taken pride and pleasure in being called ‘the good little sister.’ She desired far more than most little girls to be useful. So she felt very unhappy, and hardly ever smiled.

Her father and mother were much alarmed about her, and feared that her health would fail altogether if she did not get better and happier soon. They were disappointed too, for they thought their little girl was so good

and gentle, she would be patient under any trial.

At last her mother wrote to Aunt Esther about it—for she had gone away to spend the winter—and begged her to return to them on Eva's account, and see if she could not make her more cheerful.

Aunt Esther started immediately to go to her darling, for Eva was her especial favourite. She was deeply grieved that she should suffer so, and still more that she should be so unhappy under it. But she was not much surprised, for she knew the heart is very deceitful, and that God, in His love and wisdom, is often obliged to lay His hand upon us, and to afflict us where we are least able to bear it of ourselves, to shew us our weakness and constant need of His help. So as she journeyed swiftly along, she prayed that she might be able to comfort and strengthen the dear child, and lead her to trust in His love and wisdom, even when she would be of *no use* to any one.

Eva was quite overcome when her aunt came softly into her room and took her into her arms, almost before she knew she was in the house. She began to cry; but her aunt

told her firmly that she *must* control herself; as crying so much was greatly injuring her eyes. So Eva tried very hard to check her sobs, while her aunt went on telling her about her journey, and about her cousins she had just left, till Eva forgot her own troubles in her interest in what she said. At last she began to talk about Eva's eyes, and the reason why God had afflicted her so.

'I can't see why, auntie, I am sure,' said Eva, 'for I can't be of any use to any one, and I am a great deal of trouble to papa and mamma;' and Eva looked as if she was going to cry again.

'But, my dear child, we must believe that God does what is *best*, because He *says* He does. If we don't *see* the reason, we must *trust* Him that He has a good one. You *know* this, Eva, and used to think you trusted in Him, did you not?—just as you trust in what your parents do for you, though they do not always tell you the reason of their conduct.'

'I know I am naughty, auntie, to feel so, but I doubt if I ever could be happy while I am shut up here in the dark.'

'Yes, but you can be *patient*, my dear

and I think I can *see*, in your case, the reason why God has afflicted you so. Your being so unreconciled to His will, shews that *your will* needed to be subdued, just as if your not being willing to stay at home if your mother did nor think it best for you to go out, would shew that you *needed* to have your request refused.'

'But, auntie, I don't see how it does subdue my will ; for I never felt so cross and so unhappy before. I used to think that I loved God, and that He loved me ; but now, sometimes I am afraid to think anything about it, I feel so wicked. I am afraid I never shall be good again.'

'Do not weep, my love, but listen to me while I try to explain what I think is the reason of your feeling so. You know the Bible says we are all sinners, and that we do not love to obey God of ourselves.

'But if we pray to Him for help, He will give it to us, and will help us to be good and serve Him. But in order to do this, sometimes He has to shew us *to ourselves*; that is, to shew us how unwilling we really are to do just as He wishes us to do, or else we shall forget that it is *He* who makes us good

and begin to think that we are good of ourselves.

' If you thought you were willing to obey your mother, and she never told you to do anything but what you wanted to do, you would think, perhaps, that it was because you were so *good* that you never felt unwilling to obey her.

' But if she were to tell you to do something you *disliked* to do, if you did it, it would be because she required it; or, if you did *not* do it, it would shew that you had obeyed her before, only to *please yourself*.

' If God, looking into your heart, has seen that you were kind and obedient and gentle, more because it pleased yourself than to please *Him*, was it not kind in *Him* to shew you that? because, you know, He says we must love *Him* with all our hearts, or we cannot be His children—cannot be happy with *Him* when we die. He wishes to have the whole heart given up to *Him*.

' You, little Eva, have always loved to help others and make them happy; you loved very much to have a smile of approbation from your parents and friends; you were happy to be so *useful* to them; you *thought* you loved

God—perhaps thought you desired His approval more than that of any other.

'God saw that this was not the case, but in His love and mercy He did not let you go on in ignorance of your own heart. He touched you where it was most hard to bear. Do you understand me, my dear?'

'Yes, auntie, I think so. I see how bad I have been in not being willing that He should make me sick if He thought that was best.'

'And what, then, have you now to do?'

Pray to God, auntie, to forgive me for Christ's sake, and try not to feel so naughty any more.'

'That is it, my dear. If you only *feel* that, the lesson is begun to be learned. Then if you keep feeling so, and try to be 'willing that God shall make you sick or well, just as he sees fit, you will be a happier little girl than if all the riches of this world were yours; and you could make everybody in the world happy and comfortable.'

'But, auntie, is it not right for me to be sorry to trouble mamma, and that I am not able to help her as I used to do? I know she often gets very tired and misses me among the other children.'

'Yes, my dear, it is right; but it is not right to feel more anxious to help her than to please God. There is the trouble. You have thought more of her than of your heavenly Father. You remember the words of Jesus: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me."

'Oh, auntie, I do hope I can learn to be good and do right always.'

'You must not expect that you will always feel right at first. We can't do that till we go to heaven; but you can always be sorry when you do wrong, and ask God to forgive you, and the more you do right, the easier it will be. One thing more, my dear: did you ever think that your being unhappy and worrying so much, troubles your mother more than all the help you could render her would do her good, if you were well?'

'Why no, auntie.'

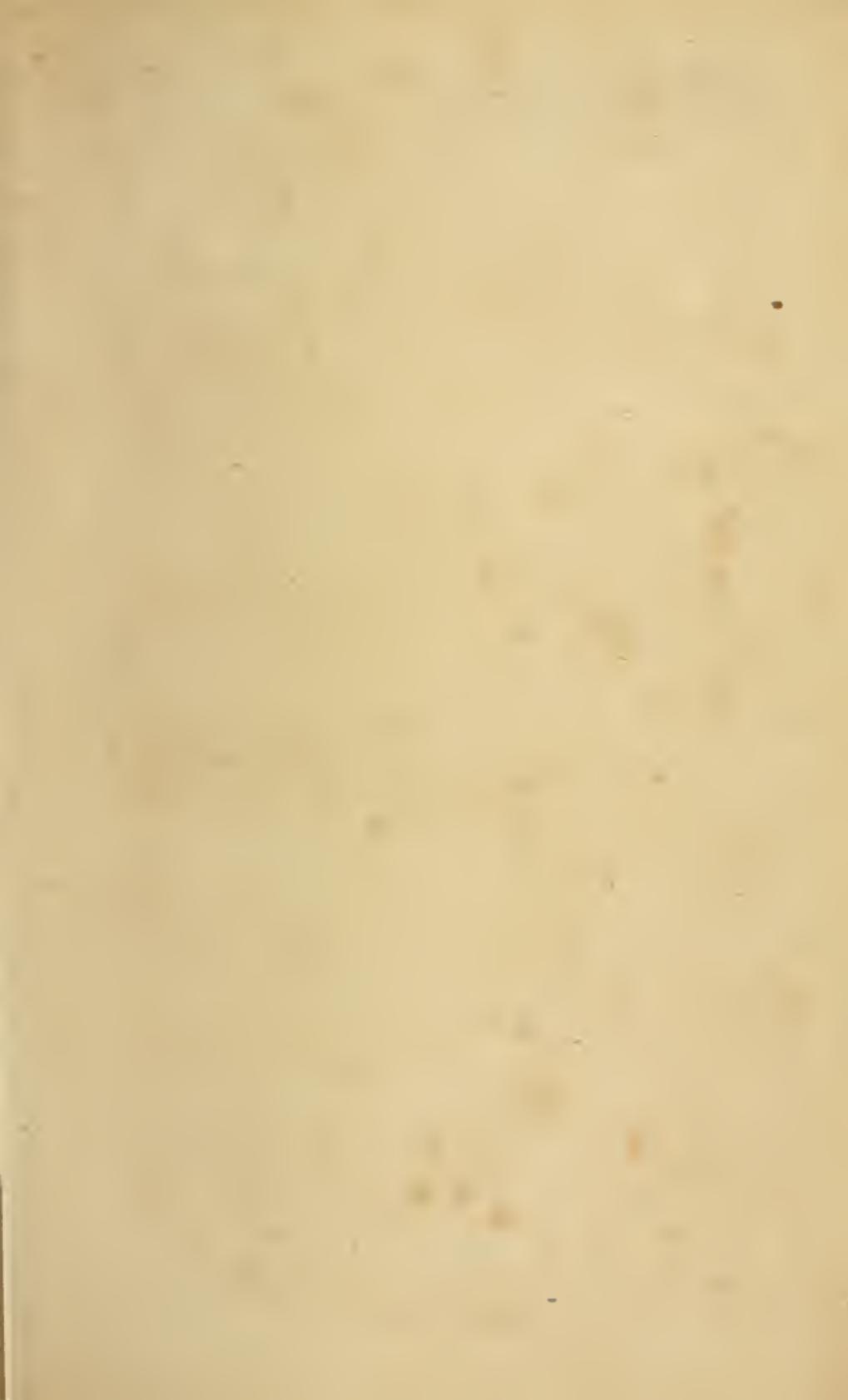
'It is quite true, my dear. If she sees you patient and happy, she will feel that her good little helper has come again. You must help her take care of *Eva*, just as you would help her take care of Lucy if she were sick.'

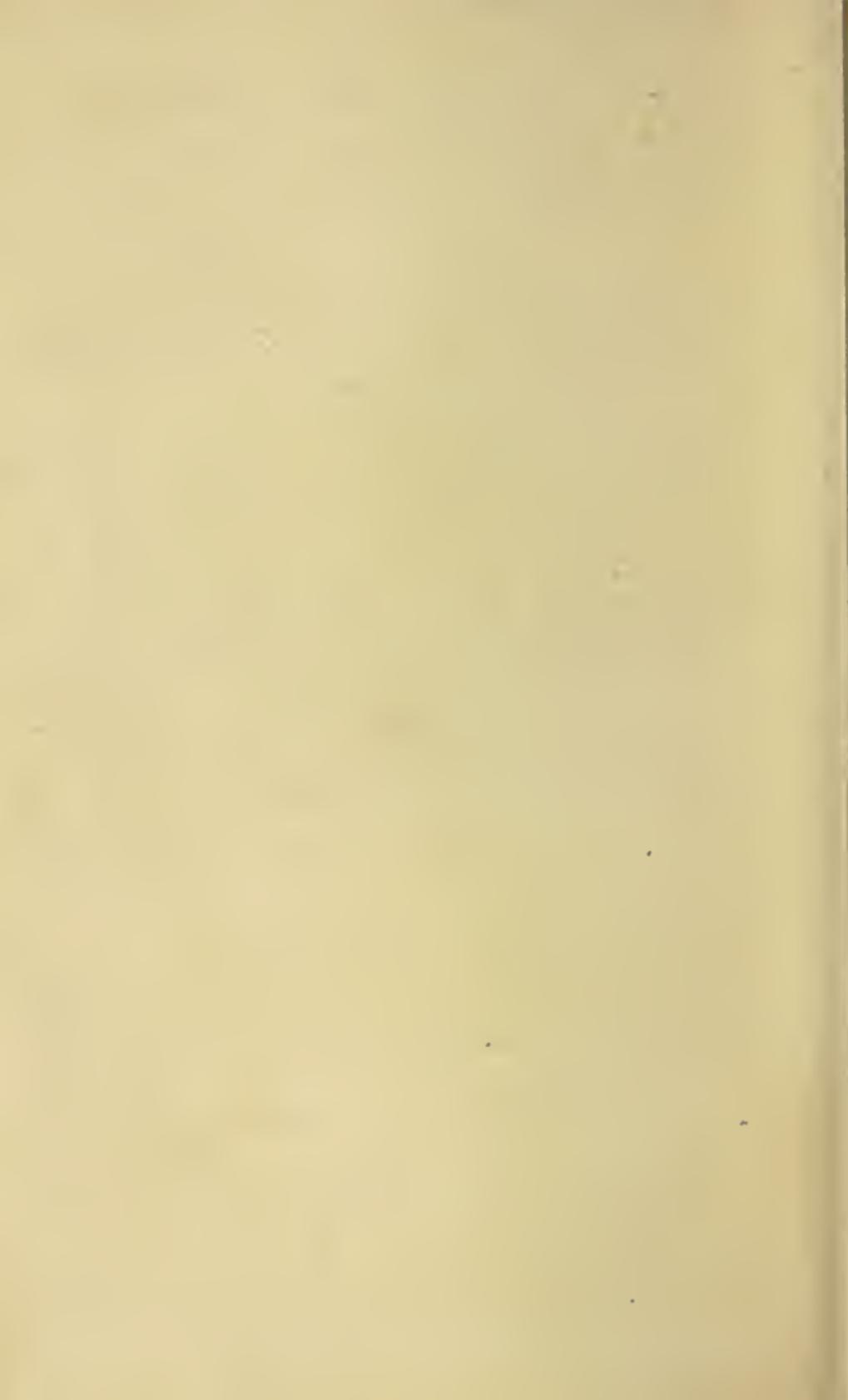
'Why, auntie, how funny! I will remember that. Now, Miss *Eva*, I am going

to take care of you ; mind and behave yourself, or I shall certainly scold. How glad I am you are come.'

Little child though she was, she was now learning that it 'was good to be afflicted.'

Little Eva's eyes were weak a long time, and she was obliged to be shut up in a dark room for many weeks. But from this time, she learned to be patient, even under her greatest trial of being 'of no use.' And all her life after this, she used to thank God that He had shewn her how much she needed His help in doing and feeling *truly right* in submitting her will *fully* to the will of God.





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